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I. F. Stone's Weekly

VOL. II, NUMBER 45 DECEMBER 13, 1954 WASHINGTON, D. C. 15 CENTS

What Reuther Reported to the CIO and the Press Ignored:

The Witch Hunt Hits The Factory Worker

A vivid picture of the way the witch hunt is engulfing the factory worker was drawn by Walter P. Reuther in his annual report as President of the CIO to its convention in Los Angeles last week. But a combination of fear and indifference seems to have muffled what he had to say. Few newspapers carried any reference at all to this portion of his report. One had to search closely even through the 12-page pre-convention issue of the CIO News, which covered the annual report, before one found on page 7 at the tail end of a story about school segregation the single paragraph which was deemed adequate. This said only that the position of government employes and defense plant workers had "deteriorated" during the past 12 months and that defense plant security programs must be watched closely, lest employers use them as "a vehicle of anti-unionism."

Those who turn to the report see that the CIO has been engaged in a quiet battle with the Defense Department. The security program has been extended to the point where the Department "proposed to require every defense worker with access to any classified information to fill out a questionnaire naming under penalties of perjury every person he has ever associated with, *no matter how many years back,* who, at any time in his entire life, had ever belonged to any of the 240 or more organizations on the Attorney General's list." This requires the worker in defense installations of any kind (a category broad enough to cover most of American industry) not only to exhume his own political past for inspection but those of all persons with whom he had associated.

Workers Must Become Informers

Reuther reported that the Defense Department finally agreed to modify this. It now requires "only" that the worker report his associations during the past five years with persons who had been members of those organizations within that period. "Even as limited, however," Reuther informed the CIO, "many employes will find the questionnaire impossible to fill out and abhorrent in principle." It might take a worker months to locate all his past associates over five years and ask them, please, to tell him whether in that period they ever belonged to any organization on the Attorney General's list. The idea is fantastic. It requires the factory worker to become a private detective, an unpaid assistant to the FBI, an informer with his neck in a noose. Serious criminal penalties not only for perjury but for wilful misstatement or omissions attach to such questionnaires.

The extent to which American labor has acquiesced in its *gleichshaltung* is indicated by how little attention this development has received. "Your officers," Reuther told the convention, "are also particularly concerned lest the information on these questionnaires come into the hands of employers who might use the 'derogatory' information thus gained by them against militant union men." Indeed the corporations which once shamefacedly hired labor spies may now righteously carry on the same kind of activity behind the facade of a plant "security" system set up to cooperate with the government. The potential of this for anti-unionism will be felt the first time a major recession makes it politic for industry to launch a full scale attack on organized labor.

The Same Security Risk Double Talk

Those who want a clearer picture of the danger than Reuther's restrained account may find it in the October, 1954, issue of *Factory Management and Maintenance* where ex-FBI man Albert J. Tuohy (an editor's note explains that Tuohy directed investigation of the Hiss, Remington, Bentley "and Canadian spy ring cases") tells "What You Can Do About Communists In Industry." Tuohy is director of security at Republic Aviation. Tuohy says the answer is "Fire 'em! . . . And that's exactly what we did to 250 of them this year." Nor do they have to be Communists. "Of those 250," Tuohy went on, "only 15 were known Communists. No matter. They all get the same treatment." All security risks, Tuohy explains, are "not necessarily subversives, not necessarily disloyal." So the factory worker faces the same miasma which renders miserable the life of the Federal employe.

Tuohy is a very sophisticated fellow, and his article is well larded with liberal sentiments. But one passage describing the work of his security organization ("All but one . . . an ex-FBI agent.") illustrates what Reuther fears. "We're alert," Tuohy writes, "to which men are becoming prominent in plant organizations ranging from hobby and sport to religious and political groups. We know who is running for office and who has been elected in the various organizations. A quick look through personnel and security files usually tells us all we need to know." Can employers with so extensive a system of plant espionage be trusted not to use it for union-busting?

Reuther realizes the danger, obviously sees that civil liberty is no longer merely a matter of concern for a few embattled intellectuals and stray non-conformists in the teaching and other professions, recognizes that the issues are becoming vital to the factory worker and the trade unionist.

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The Meaning of McCarthy's Attack on Ike

The violence of McCarthy's attack on the President is a measure of his desperation. He first sent the statement to Mundt who refused to read it for him, remarking that he could accept no responsibility "for an attack upon the President." McCarthy then turned up and read it himself. Mundt's attitude and Knowland's quick disclaimer of sympathy are indicative. McCarthy is no longer playing practical politics.

But the sensational exchange between McCarthy and the White House, in retaliation for Eisenhower's "well done" to Watkins, should not hide the more serious difficulties of the Administration. Knowland is entrenched as majority leader and Bridges is headed for the chairmanship of the Republican policy committee in the Senate. The China Lobby, the preventive war crowd, the trouble-makers occupy key posts.

The President deserves applause and support for the extraordinary restraint he has shown under pressure at home and provocation from abroad. What we are seeing is the painful task of slowly extricating the United States from the cold war, and preparing the way for peaceful co-existence. Only a General at the head of the conservative party, backed by big business, could do it. If the Democrats were in, the air would resound with cries of treason.

It is unfortunate that we have been pushed as a nation into so undignified a position by a policy of half war, half peace with the new China. We cannot logically finance Chiang, operate CIA monkey business and refuse to recognize Peking without running into just the kind of humiliation we are now suffering in the case of the 11 aviators.

But as a matter of practical politics, our China policy cannot be reversed in a day. A "cooling off" period is necessary and it is the job of the neutral powers and of Moscow to sober up a Peking which begins to seem "giddy with success."

The balance of forces in Washington is precarious. It would be criminal folly for Moscow or Peking to take for national weakness what the President is doing in his search for peace. If they want co-existence, they had better not undercut the one man who can bring it about.

McCarthy and the Catholics

What really unnerved the more intelligent McCarthyites is that, though there are large blocks of Irish Catholic votes in the urban areas which are traditionally Democratic, these if really pro-McCarthy had no influence on the censure vote. Of seven Catholic Democratic Senators, six (Mansfield, Murray, O'Mahoney, Chavez, Burke and Pastore) voted to condemn McCarthy. The seventh, Kennedy, is ill. McCarran, the only Democratic Catholic Senator who would have supported McCarthy, is dead. The two other Catholic Senators, Barrett of Wyoming and Purtell of Connecticut, voted for McCarthy but both are Republicans. Most of the East Coast hierarchy, particularly Cardinal Spellman, is indeed pro-McCarthy, but they were also mostly anti-Roosevelt, and then too the clerical bark was no clue to the electoral bite.

Mendes-France and the H-Bomb

At the last minute, on objections from Secretary Dulles, Mendes-France eliminated from his United Nations speech in New York a proposal (like Nehru's) for a standstill agreement to end further H and A bomb tests. The news leaked to *Paris-Presse*. The French Prime Minister's thinking is reflected in an article in the latest issue of his friend Servan-Schreiber's *L'Express* which reprints the warnings about the danger of radioactivity expressed by the French physicist, C. Noel Martin. While in Washington, Mendes-France joined the British in opposing the Dulles plan for a SEATO meeting at Bangkok to frame a new agreement for common action against "internal aggression" or "subversion." Anglo-French objection sees this as a step toward the kind of interventionism exemplified in Guatemala.

When Junker and Samurai Have The H-Bomb

Possession of the H-Bomb may act as a brake on war in the hands of two such powers as the U.S. and the U.S.S.R. For all their differences, neither has a hereditary military caste nor a tradition which glories in war. For both peoples war is an unpleasant necessity. But what happens when, as is inevitable, these dread new weapons are in the hands of the Germans and Japanese, which have such a caste and such a tradition? At the end of the road opened by East-West conflict over Germany and Japan stands a new Hitler, armed this time with the capacity to turn the whole earth into a crematorium.

The Old Japan Begins to Re-Emerge

A visit to the U.S. seems to be dangerous for European statesmen. Adenauer went home to lose an election, Mendes-France to face an Assembly slipping back into its old splinter habits, Yoshida to lose his job as Prime Minister. His successor is worse. Washington finds consolation in the fact that Hatoyama is so fiercely anti-Communist, Moscow in the fact that he is for diplomatic relations with Russia and China. Both Washington and Moscow blind themselves to the fact that with the change Japan swings back further to the pre-war type of mentality which cost America and Russia so much in the past.

Georgia's Chain Gang System Before The Supreme Court

Article VIII of the Bill of Rights forbids "cruel and unusual punishments." The clause is invoked by an appeal which has just been filed here in the U.S. Supreme Court on behalf of Edward Brown by the Philadelphia lawyer, David Levinson, and counsel for the NAACP. The Court is asked to overrule an extradition order from Governor Herman Talmadge of Georgia which has been upheld by the Pennsylvania courts. Seventeen years ago Brown was arrested for the accidental death of a man. On the advice of a white attorney, he pleaded guilty and was sentenced to life on the chain gang. This is his terrible story, as told in the bald language of an NAACP release:

"Brown testified in the lower courts that he had been subjected to all sorts of cruel treatment which included being placed in a sweat box . . . with no ventilation except a two-inch opening, with no toilet facilities or water. He was beaten with blackjacks, rubber hoses and other instruments.

"On December 19, 1937, he escaped and on June 21, 1940, was recaptured. Despite the promises of the Georgia Prison authorities that the chain gang system was no longer in existence . . . the moment Brown was back in the State of Georgia, he was subjected to even more cruel treatment.

"Brown escaped again on September 22, 1940, and was at liberty until 1947 when he was recaptured. The treatment on his recapture was the same as before except for chains . . .

"On two occasions he was put in the 'stretcher' which resembles a medieval rack. Once he was strung from a tree by the wrists and beaten until the blood dripped from his body. On another occasion when he had caught cold he was given a half pint of castor oil, staked to the ground and covered with molasses to attract insects and animals. On this occasion the warden's son urinated in his face.

"In January 1950, he escaped once more and fled to Philadelphia. In April 1952 Brown was taken into custody and put into jail at the request of Governor Talmadge . . ."

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McCarthy's Charge That Investigators Put A "Mail Cover" on Him

Opening The Door on A Police State Skeleton in The Postoffice

McCarthy, always a stickler for civil liberties where his own are involved, put the spotlight on a real issue when he protested the "mail cover" put on him by the Gillette subcommittee.

It is a crime to interfere with someone's mail in order "to pry into the business or secrets of another." It is also a crime for a postal employe "unlawfully to detain or open any letter." Despite these two provisions of the law, it appears that the postal service is accustomed to place "covers" on the mail of suspected persons. Such a "cover" was used in the McCarthy investigation.

David H. Stephens, the chief postal inspector, testified on the matter at the one-day hearing held by the special Ferguson-George committee on December 2. Stephens explained that the postoffice imposes such "covers" at the request of police or other government investigators. But he insisted that no letters are opened and that the postoffice merely reports "what the exterior of the letter discloses," i.e. the postmark, the return address and any similar information. Stephens also said the postal employe "may not in so doing in any way retard the handling of the mail." Whether a "cover" can be operated without delaying the mails is open to question.

No Test Because Secret

The practice of imposing "covers" rests on a postal regulation which says that "to aid in the apprehension of fugitives from justice, a postmaster may give to officers of the law, upon proper identification, information regarding the addresses, return cards or postmarks on mail, but shall not withhold such mail from the addressee or delay its delivery." There is reason to suspect that in other cases, as in McCarthy's, the use of a "cover" is not limited to fugitives. It would be miraculous in the current atmosphere if "covers" were not used for political espionage. The legality of the regulation has never been tested because people never know when their mail is being watched.

A legal test would start with the leading case on the subject, an 1877 Supreme Court decision (96 U.S. 727) in which Mr. Justice Field ruled that letters or sealed packages "in the mail are as fully guarded from examination and inspection, except as to their outward form and weight, as if they were retained by the parties forwarding them in their own domicile. The constitutional guaranty of the right of the people to be secure in their persons against unreasonable searches and seizures extends to their papers, thus closed against inspection, wherever they may be . . ." The question to be decided by the courts is whether reporting the source and character of a man's mail from outward examination is not equally an invasion of his privacy.

Never Before Against A Senator

The unpopularity of McCarthy and his own readiness to use improper methods should not blind us to the gravity of the charge. The chief postal inspector testified that he had never before heard of a mail "cover" being used against a U.S. Senator.

A grand jury inquest is certainly called for. Even more important would be a full Senatorial investigation to determine just how widespread the practice is. McCarthy has opened a door on a real police state skeleton in the postal service. But there ought to be opposition to McCarthy's effort to make ex-FBI man Paul J. Cotter, chief counsel of the Gillette committee, the goat of that inquiry. McCarthy's interrogation of Cotter showed how eager he is to punish Cotter for his temerity in daring to investigate McCarthy's bank accounts.

Cotter told an interesting story in his own behalf. He said he and McCarthy had mutual friends and when he took over the job, "I felt that perhaps by sitting down with him [McCarthy] . . . and discussing a lot of these allegations and finances informally that we could clear up a lot of this smoke."

McCarthy declined to talk with Cotter informally about the financial charges against him "but suggested," according to Cotter, "that we meet at a dinner, my wife and Miss Kerr and he and another chap and his wife, at this third party's house." Cotter said, "That I did not want to do," explaining later in the hearing "I did not feel the place to do it was at a social gathering." This refusal to be "shmoosed" does credit to Cotter.

De Profundis

Westbrook Pegler at a McCarran Memorial Meeting in (appropriately enough) Lost Battalion Hall, Queens, N. Y., Dec. 6, said small crowds at recent pro-McCarthy rallies were "melancholy and depressing." "Let's face it," he said, "we have been laying some terrible eggs lately—let's not kid ourselves. We're a minority. I don't know why we can't turn out a good crowd." (Source: N.Y. Journal American, Dec. 7).

The Intermediary Was Robert E. Lee

When McCarthy pressed Cotter to give the name of that third party, Cotter reluctantly identified him as "Bob Lee", that is now Federal Communications Commissioner Robert E. Lee. Though this was one of the "hottest" items in the testimony, so far as I know not a single newspaper or radio commentator has published the fact that Lee was the intermediary. Cotter said when McCarthy declined to discuss the charges, a mail "cover" was ordered to determine whether he had other banking accounts and through what brokerage houses and third parties he was speculating.

Cotter said he was familiar with mail covers from his work with the FBI and other investigating agencies. "It is a pretty common practice," he told the committee. "When I took this investigation," Cotter said to McCarthy during the hearing, "I was quite as willing to clear you as to determine any information . . . I have a number of friends who are great admirers of yours."

Cotter said the actual mail cover order came from another ex-FBI man employed by the committee, Francis X. Plant, whom the McCarthy committee tried to hire. Cotter, giving Plant's credentials, said Plant was "with Whittaker Chambers during the Hiss trial."

Jean Kerr and The Soy Beans

McCarthy wanted to know why a mail cover was also put on Jean Kerr, then his fiance. "It was Jean Kerr," Cotter explained, "who went down and made that transfer of the money you got from the new Congressman from Michigan [Bentley]. You had her take the money out of the bank and send it to the chap in Wisconsin who put it in the brokerage account and bought the soy beans with it. So this was all an intimate group to you . . ." McCarthy dropped that line of questioning.

The mail cover apparently was imposed without the knowledge of any member of the Gillette committee. Senator Hayden pointed out that in one McCarthy hearing McCarthy told a witness, "We have 600 of your telephone calls recorded." Hayden said this was the equivalent of a mail cover. Nobody asked McCarthy if he or his staff used mail covers. A safe guess is that McCarthy's ex-FBI men have used this device as readily as ex-FBI man Cotter. Since this may be the last chance in a long time to really explore the practice, it is to be hoped that liberal Senators will press for a full inquiry.

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Reuther Fails Even to Mention The 1st and 5th Amendments

(*Continued from Page One*)

No doubt he also understands the cord which binds the mania about "security" to the world tension which gave it birth. The shocking thing about the report is how timidly it discusses civil liberty and how equivocally it touches on the related problems of foreign policy.

Here are some of the vital omissions. There is not one word in the report about the Fifth Amendment or the First. What if a worker, confronted with one of those questionnaires, does not want to hazard perjury or prosecution, and pleads the Fifth? What if a worker invokes the First and declines to accept the restriction on his basic freedoms which these questionnaires impose? What if he declines on moral grounds to inform on others, especially when this may mean exposing a friend to trouble as serious as deportation for a matter as slight as having been a member of the International Workers Order. (This is no far-fetched example—a 61-year old Baltimore grandmother faces deportation for just that.) When the Bill of Rights thus begins to mean bread and butter to workers, how can Reuther discuss the situation without once mentioning the Fifth or the First?

Doesn't The 5th Apply to Workers?

The Courts have held again and again that the Fifth is a shield for the innocent, and that no presumption of guilt attaches to its invocation. Yet the General Electric Company and other concerns have begun to discharge workers who plead the Fifth. A suit brought by the United Electrical, Radio and Machine Workers against General Electric has just been tried and awaits decision in Federal District Court here. Where does the CIO stand on this? Will it lend its weight to an appeal if the decision goes against the UE? Will it protest the new Fifth Amendment firings at Bethlehem Steel?

Reuther in his report applauds Flanders for launching an attack on McCarthy, and called (the report was written in advance) for the latter's censure. But beyond this there is not one word in the report about the Congressional inquisition generally. A Congressman as far right as Walter of Pennsylvania was daring enough to propose the abolition of the Un-American Activities Committee before he was vetoed by the House Democratic leadership, but Reuther does not even mention the committee. Nor the Senate Internal Security Committee, that other arm of the witch hunt. Nor the McCarthy hearings on defense plants which precipitated the General Electric firings and provide an easy mechanism for collaboration between anti-labor employers and the Congressional inquisitors.

There is no mention in the report of the need to reform investigating committee procedure or to limit its scope, both matters vital now to the labor movement. There is not one word of condemnation for passage of the immunity bill, which makes it possible to strip witnesses of their Fifth amendment privilege. Nothing is said of the fact that Eisenhower and Brownell put through a bill which for the first time in American history could deprive native born radicals of their citizenship, converting them into stateless persons. These are all measures which add to the atmosphere of fear and repression that is beginning to engulf workers as well as intellectuals.

Soft on the Democrats

Of all the repressive measures in the last session of Congress, Reuther mentions only one, the anti-Communist law. Those who turn to the text of what he said will see how weak it is. Who would guess from this discussion alone that the liberal Democrats fathered the worst provisions of this law, that it applies not only to Communist "dominated" but to Communist "infiltrated" unions, and that the Humphrey-Morse amendment established standards so loose and vague for determining who is a Communist as to threaten any radical, militant trade unionist or liberal? Or that a man adjudged Communist by these standards may be sent to jail five years for failing to register under this new law? This is how the information in those security questionnaires may lead to frame-up and jail. And this is why repeal of the new law—for which Reuther fails to ask—is of vital concern to the labor movement.

Next Week: The C.I.O. and Foreign Policy.

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